

Listing of Claims:

1-24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A sole for footwear comprising:

a toe part being made of a substantially inflexible material;

a ball part being made of a flexible material; and

an instep-heel part being made of a substantially inflexible material;

wherein the instep-heel part includes at least one cut-out that extends through an entire thickness of the instep-heel part so that at least a portion of a wearer's foot is exposed through the cut-out when the wearer's foot is inserted into the footwear.

26. (Previously Presented) The sole according to claim 25, wherein the toe part is made of a composite material of carbon fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

27. (Currently Amended) The sole according to claim 26, wherein the instep-heel part is made of ~~a~~ the composite material of carbon fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

28. (Previously Presented) The sole according to claim 27, wherein the ball part is made of a composite material of aramid fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

29. (Previously Presented) The sole according to claim 25, further comprising a plurality of spikes attached to the toe part.

30-33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear comprising:

a sole having a toe part, a ball part, an instep part, and a heel part, wherein the heel part includes at least one cut-out that extends through an entire thickness of the heel part so that at least a portion of a wearer's foot is exposed through the cut-out when the wearer's foot is inserted into the article of footwear;

an open toe section;

an instep section having two instep side supports, the instep side supports being connected to the instep part of the sole and ~~otherwise being open~~ defining at least one opening that extends through an entire thickness of the instep side supports;
and
a heel section.

35. (Previously Presented) The article of footwear of claim 34, wherein the heel section comprises two heel side supports and an end heel support, wherein the two heel side supports and the end heel support are connected at a first end to the heel part of the sole and are connected to each other at the other end.

36. (Currently Amended) An article of footwear comprising:

a sole having a toe part, a ball part, an instep part, and a heel part, wherein the heel part includes at least one cut-out that extends through an entire thickness of the heel part so that at least a portion of a wearer's foot is exposed through the cut-out when the wearer's foot is inserted into the article of footwear;

an open toe section;

an instep section; and

a heel section, wherein the heel section has two heel side supports and an end heel support, and the two heel side supports and the end heel support are connected at a first end to the heel part of the sole and are connected to each other at the other end.

37. (Currently Amended) The article of footwear of claim 36, wherein the instep section has two instep side supports, the instep side supports being connected to the instep part of the sole and ~~otherwise being open~~ defining at least one opening that extends through an entire thickness of the instep side supports.

38. (Previously Presented) The article of footwear of claim 37, further comprising an upper instep section.

39. (Previously Presented) The article of footwear of claim 38, wherein the upper instep section is attached to the instep side supports by means of adjustable ties.

40. (Previously Presented) The article of footwear of claim 36, further comprising a plurality of spikes mounted on an underside of the toe part of the sole.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously Presented) The article of footwear of claim 36, wherein the article of footwear is an athletic shoe.

43-47. (Canceled)

48. (New) The sole according to claim 25, wherein the toe part is curved in a direction extending away from a ground-contact surface of the sole in each of a medial side, a lateral side, and a distal side of the toe part.

49. (New) The article of footwear of claim 34, wherein the toe part is curved in a direction extending away from a ground-contact surface of the sole in each of a medial side, a lateral side, and a distal side of the toe part.

50. (New) The article of footwear of claim 36, wherein the toe part is curved in a direction extending away from a ground-contact surface of the sole in each of a medial side, a lateral side, and a distal side of the toe part.

51. (New) The article of footwear of claim 34, wherein the at least one opening defines a majority of the instep side supports.

52. (New) The article of footwear of claim 37, wherein the at least one opening defines a majority of the instep side supports.